

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 KATHMA 02313 220407Z

17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

EB-07 AID-05 IO-10 /078 W

----- 007738

R 220230Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1753

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KATHMANDU 2313

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT NP

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, A STATUS REPORT

REF: KATHMANDU 2068 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION MEMBERS HAVE NOW COMPLETED THEIR FIRST TOURS THROUGH COUNTRY IN MOVE TO SOLICIT PUBLIC OPINION AND HAVE RETURNED TO KATHMANDU AMIDST GROWING CALLS FOR COMPLETE AND DIRECT ADULT FRANCHISE IN ALL PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMOFF COMMISSION MEMBER DHUNDI RAJ BHANDARI CONFIRMED WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT COMMISSION IS NOW SPLIT BETWEEN THOSE WHO URGE ADULT FRANCHISE AND THOSE WHO, WHILE WILLING TO ENLARGE FRANCHISE, CONTINUE TO RESIST DIRECT ELECTIONS. BHANDARI SAID THAT IF VOTE WERE TAKEN TODAY COMMISSION WOULD PROBABLY VOTE 4 TO 2 IN FAVOR OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, WITH MOHAMMED MOSHIN'S POSITION STILL UNKNOWN. HE SAID THAT COMMISSION WISHED TO PRESENT UNANIMOUS REPORT, BUT HE WOULD NOT HAZARD OPINION ON HOW ISSUE WILL ULTIMATELY BE RESOLVED. HE STATED THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY ATTITUDE HE HAD SEEN IN PALACE WHICH CONTINUED TO ALLOW COMMISSION COMPLETE FREEDOM. HE ALSO POINTED TO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 KATHMA 02313 220407Z

PRESS STORIES WHICH HAD GIVEN "AFAIRLY ACCURATE- REPORT OF

COMMISSION FINDINGS OUTSIDE KATHMANDU VALLEY.

3. FOLLOWING PETITION BY 18 PANCHAYAT MEMBERS CALLING FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS (REFTEL) A NUMBER OF PROMINENT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALSO RECOMMENDED SWEEPING REFORMS. BAR ASSOCIATION AT JANAKPURDHAM, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS PASSED UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION ASKING FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO ALL PANCHAYAT BRANCHES, ELECTION OF PRIME MINISTER BY NATIONAL PANCHAYAT, AND "FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS" OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. IN SAPTARI DISTRICT ALL BUT TWO MEMBERS OF PANCHAYAT ORGANIZATION URGED COMMISSION TO PUSH FOR ADULT FRANCHISE AND DIRECT ELECTIONS. SIMILAR VIEWS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN VOICED BY PANCHAYATS IN BARA AND RAUTAHAT DISTRICTS DURING VISITS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS.

4. FORMER PRIME MINISTERS ARE ALSO NOW BEGINNING TO BE HEARD. M. P. KOIRALA TOLD COMMISSION THAT "COUNTRY CAN ONLY BE SAVED BY BALANCE OF PEOPLES' POWER AND KING'S AUTHORITY." TANKA PRASAD ACHARYA HAS ENDORSED DIRECT ELECTIONS BUT ADVOCATED DEVELOPMENT OF ONE PARTY SYSTEM. MORE INTERESTING, PERHAPS, IS REPORT CARRIED BY PRO-INDIA "ARATI" WEEKLY THAT COMMISSION HAS EVEN APPROACHED B. P. KOIRALA FOR HIS VIEWS. ACCORDING TO STORY B. P. TOLD COMMISSION THAT HE DOESN'T CARE WHAT THE SYSTEM IS CALLED -- BE IT PARLIAMENTARY OR PANCHAYAT -- BUT IT MUST CONTAIN ELEMENTS OF FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRACY; MULTI-PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM "RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TO PEOPLE."

5. COMMENT: COMMISSION MEMBERS WILL REPORTEDLY MAKE AT LEAST ONE MORE ROUND OF TRIPS TO COUNTRYSIDE BEFORE DRAFTING REPORT. ALTHOUGH PUSH FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS MAY NOT BE REAL GROUND SWELL, IT CLEARLY IS IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH COMMISSION WILL HAVE TO FACE. POLITICAL FIGURES WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED SEEM NOW TO HAVE NEW AIR OF COURAGE AND WILLINGNESS TO URGE REFORMS WHICH, EVEN SIX MONTHS AGO, HAD BEEN DISCOUNTED AS "UNREALISTIC." WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, HAVE ANY FEEL FOR PALACE REACTION. BHANDARI AND OTHERS APPEAR TO BE ENCOURAGED THAT PALACE HAS NOT INTERVENED IN COMMISSION AFFAIRS DIRECTLY AND HAVE TAKEN HEART FROM FACT THAT NO MOVE HAS BEEN MADE TO CLAMP DOWN ON PRESS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 KATHMA 02313 220407Z

OTHERS PUSHING FOR "MEANINGFUL" REFORM. THE KING MAY (AND THAT IS STILL CONDITIONAL) SURPRISE EVERYONE BY ACCEPTING BASIC ELEMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, I.E., DIRECT ELECTIONS AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY IF SAFEGUARDS CAN BE DEvised TO PREVENT NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY FROM GAINING REAL POWER. HOWEVER POLITICIANS HERE REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THE KING WILL ACCEPT SWEEPING REFORMS, SINCE THEY AGREE THAT NCP IS ONLY ORGANIZATION WITH PEOPLE AND

RESOURCES TO PROFIT FROM DIRECT ELECTIONS. QUANTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION REFORM, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KATHMA02313
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750179-0600
From: KATHMANDU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750528/aaaaaytl.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 KATHMANDU 2068
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, A STATUS REPORT
TAGS: PINT, NP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006